

How can we Construct a Science of Consciousness?

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Monday, April 20th 3:15-4:45 p.m.

**Physicians Auditorium
College Street**

**Department of Philosophy
Visiting Speaker Series
College of Charleston**

Reception to follow in Arnold Hall

- ❖ It is undeniable that some organisms are subjects of experience. But the question of how it is that these systems are subjects of experience is perplexing.
- ❖ Why is it that when our cognitive systems engage in visual and auditory information processing, we have visual and auditory experiences: the quality of deep blue, the sensation of middle C?
- ❖ Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all?
- ❖ Even when we have explained the the performance of all cognitive and behavioral functions in the vicinity of experience - perceptual discrimination, categorization, internal access, verbal report - the question remains: Why is the performance of these functions accompanied by experience?

Dave Chalmers lit the philosophical world on fire with his bold presentation of what he terms "the hard problem of consciousness." This problem is in contrast to the "easy problems of consciousness" or those that are susceptible to the standard methods of cognitive science, whereby a phenomenon is explained in terms of computational or neural mechanism. The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of *experience*. When we think and perceive, there is a whirl of information-processing, but there is also a subjective aspect - there is *something it is like* to be a conscious organism.

